

Fw: Konza prairie air monitor

Tapp, Joshua

Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2013 9:46 AM

To: Smith, John; Bryan, David; Hood, Rich; Jay, Michael; Algae-Eakin, Amy; Kemp, Lachala; Grier, Gina

From: Craig Volland

Sent: Thursday, April 18, 2013 9:33:50 AM

To: John Blair

Cc: Weber, Rebecca; Tapp, Joshua; TGross@kdheks.gov; rmanes@tnc.org; trewyn@k-state.edu; Lear, Gary; John Briggs; Brian Spooner

Subject: Re: Konza prairie air monitor

John, thanks for your thoughts. Regulation under the Clean Air Act is an extraordinarily convoluted affair, and I'm glad I'm not directly responsible for it. Nonetheless we need to keep in mind the original purpose of the Act which is to protect the public health. At this point we are just trying to figure out what happened in this case. We appreciate the work you guys are doing on patch burn.

Best regards, Craig Volland, Kansas Sierra Club

On Apr 17, 2013, at 9:19 PM, John Blair wrote:

> Dear Mr. Volland,

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> Thank you for sharing this information about your concerns (and those of the Sierra Club) regarding the termination of the high-quality ozone measurements at the Konza CASTNET site. I understand your concerns about air quality in Kansas, and documenting regional air quality in the Flint Hills and surrounding areas. As lead PI of the Konza Prairie NSF-funded Long-Term Ecological Research (LTER) program at Konza Prairie Biological Station, I have been involved in our cooperative agreement with the Clean Air Standards and Trends Network (CASTNET) since 2002.

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> The CASTNET program began with an emphasis on documenting air quality in stable locations (national parks, long-term research sites, etc.) that were in relatively rural regions of the US and unimpacted by local (urban) sources of pollution. As such, Konza seemed like an ideal site, and CASTNET measurements at Konza complemented other related data from national monitoring networks such as the National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP), the NOAA Climate Reference Network (CRN), and the USGS Hydrologic Benchmark network (all of which also have sites on Konza). We were pleased to be able to contribute to the CASTNET program goals, and the data they generated was/is useful for our long-term research program. However, recent changes in federal regulations apparently led to the requirement that all CASTNET sites (and any other sites that met certain federal guidelines) are now required to submit their data to the EPA database that is used for regulatory purposes. Thus, the CASTNET data from Konza now has regulatory consequences as well as research value.

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> Currently, our CASTNET monitor is (was) the only monitor for ozone concentrations in the Riley County area. I think that is the primary reason why KDHE opposed our continued involvement in the CASTNET program. They were a strong proponent for ceasing operation of the CASTNET ozone monitor for those reasons. They didn't choose Konza as a site for Kansas regulatory purposes, and they stated that Konza would not have been an optimal choice because of its potential to be impacted by burning in the broader Flint Hills regions.

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> I, too, was disappointed to lose a long-term dataset with value for determining current and future changes in air quality of the northern Flint Hills region. It would not have been my choice. However, the position of TNC and KSU is that serving as a regulatory site is not our (Konza Prairie's) primary purpose, and the use of CASTNET data as regulatory data was not acceptable. In addition, according to KDHE continuing these measurements would lead to significant costs to the state and potential impacts on burning and conservation of grasslands in the Flint Hills. If I can provide additional information about the CASTNET measurements at our site, and/or the value of other relevant data from the Konza LTER program, please feel free to contact me.

>
> John Blair
> Konza Prairie LTER Principle Investigator
> Edwin G. Brychta Professor of Biology
> University Distinguished Professor of Biology

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> ----- Original Message -----

> From: "Craig Volland" <hartwood2@kc.rr.com>
> To: "Gary Lear" <Lear.Gary@epa.gov>
> Cc: "Rebecca Weber" <Weber.Rebecca@epa.gov>, "Joshua Tapp" <Tapp.Joshua@epa.gov>, TGross@kdheks.gov, rmanes@tnc.org, trewyn@k-state.edu, "John Blair" <jblair@ksu.edu>
> Sent: Wednesday, April 17, 2013 3:39:09 PM
> Subject: Re: Konza prairie air monitor

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> Dear Mr. Lear,

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> Thanks for the information. We think the public needs to know about this development, so we sent out this press release and fact sheet today.

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> Sincerely, Craig Volland
> Chair, Air Quality Committee
> Kansas Chapter, Sierra Club

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> EPA Shuts Kansas Air Monitor that Indicates Health Threat

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> Dear Sierra Club Contact Craig Volland,

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> FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

> Contact: Craig Volland, 913-334-0556, hartwood2@kc.rr.com Without prior public notice, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has discontinued monitoring for ozone pollution at the Konza Prairie site near Manhattan, Kansas. This monitor, which has been collecting valuable data since 2002, has consistently indicated levels of pollution high enough during certain times of the year to cause

> In response to our inquiry, EPA says they complied with a request from the landowner, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and from Kansas State University (KSU), the operating agency, to remove the monitor. Documents attached to EPA's response indicate that TNC and KSU were concerned that the monitor would be used for regulatory compliance purposes and interfere with their research on rangeland burning.

> The Konza Prairie ozone monitor is also particularly valuable because it is located within the Flint Hills itself and available to assess effects on residents very near the burning.

> In their 2010 Smoke Management Plan KDHE promised to consult with the Centers for Disease Control to develop a more comprehensive study on the potential health impacts of the burning in the Flint Hills. The discontinuance of the Konza Prairie monitor will likely complicate that task.

> More information can be found on the attached Fact Sheet including a link to EPA documents.

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> On Apr 15, 2013, at 3:12 PM, Lear, Gary wrote:

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 > Dear Mr. Volland,
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 > Thank you for your interest in the CASTNET monitoring program. The ozone monitor at the Konza Prairie CASTNET site was discontinued on April 5 following requests from Mr. Rob Manes at The Nature Conservancy (the land owner) and Dr. Ron Trewyn of Kansas State University (the operating agency) (correspondence attached). Because CASTNET monitors operate at the discretion of the land owner and operator, we complied with these requests.
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 > If I can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.
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 > Best regards,
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 > Gary
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 > Gary Lear
 > CASTNET Program Manager
 > 202-343-9159
 > USEPA/OAR/OAP/CAMD
 > Washington DC
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 > -----Original Message-----
 > From: Tom Gross [<mailto:TGross@kdheks.gov>]
 > Sent: Friday, April 12, 2013 2:26 PM
 > To: 'Craig Volland'
 > Cc: Tapp, Joshua
 > Subject: RE: Konza prairie air monitor
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 > Craig
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 > That is an EPA monitor not a KDHE one, so I will defer to them. I will copy Josh Tapp on this note so he can respond. Our preliminary review of the satellite images shows limited burning this year in the Flint Hills.
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 > Tom
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 > Thomas Gross
 > Bureau of Air
 > Kansas Department of Health and Environment
 > 1000 SW Jackson, Suite 310
 > Topeka, Kansas 66612
 > (785) 296-1692
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 > -----Original Message-----
 > From: Craig Volland [<mailto:hartwood2@kc.rr.com>]
 > Sent: Thursday, April 11, 2013 4:25 PM
 > To: Tom Gross
 > Subject: Konza prairie air monitor
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 > Hey Tom. I was checking the Konza prairie monitor on CASTNET to see how it was reacting to this year's burning season and it doesn't seem to be working.
 > Do you know what's going on with it?
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 > Regards, Craig Volland
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 > -----FORWARDED MESSAGE-----

> -----Original Message-----

> From: rmanes@tnc.org [mailto:rmanes@tnc.org]

> Sent: Wednesday, April 03, 2013 4:15 PM

> To: Tapp, Joshua

> Cc: John Briggs; Brian K. Obermeyer; Lance Hedges; Tom Gross; R.W. Trewyn

> Subject: Re: Konza Ozone Monitor

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> Dear Mr. Tapp:

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> The Nature Conservancy strongly supports science-based restoration and stewardship of environmental health in all realms, including air quality. However, after consulting with our partners at Kansas State University (see message below), as well as other experts and stakeholders, I am sending this message to ask that the EPA monitoring equipment that is used for compliance data gathering be removed from Konza Biological Research Station as soon as possible. If I need to take further action in order to complete this removal, please let me know; or call me (620-388-1940), if you would like to discuss this further.

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> Sincerely,

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> Rob Manes

> Director, The Nature Conservancy of Kansas

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> Rob:

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> Following lengthy discussions with our Konza Prairie Biological Station leadership team and others at Kansas State regarding the ozone monitor on the CASTNET system, it appears the only acceptable path forward is to remove the ozone monitor from the Konza site while retaining the other CASTNET components along with our member status in the CASTNET research network. Being a research site has always been our goal; being a regulatory site was neither anticipated nor desired.

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> It's not clear what steps are required to actually remove the ozone monitor from the system, but the sooner that can be done the better.

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> Please let me know if you have any questions and thank you for your assistance in facilitating this request.

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> Best wishes,

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> Ron

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> R.W. Trewyn, PhD

> Vice President for Research

> Kansas State University

> 105 Anderson Hall

> Manhattan, KS 66506-0113

> Phone: 785/532-5110

> Fax: 785

> Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

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> From: Robert Manes [mailto:RMANES@TNC.ORG]

> Sent: Wednesday, March 27, 2013 12:07 AM

> To: Tapp, Joshua

> Cc: John Briggs; Brian K. Obermeyer; Lance Hedges; Tom Gross

> Subject: Konza Ozone Monitor

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> Dear Mr. Tapp:

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> The purpose of this message is to communicate concerns, on behalf of The Nature Conservancy of Kansas (TNC), regarding the ozone monitor currently sited at Konza Biological Station, a 9,000-acre research property near Manhattan, KS, owned primarily by TNC and operated by Kansas State University. I would first emphasize that TNC continues to fully support the CASTNET monitoring program goals of providing long-term data sets for ozone and other air quality parameters. We also support the gathering of scientific data that can aid in analyzing, abating and facilitating adaptation to climate change.

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> I was concerned, however, to learn recently that the status of the Konza monitoring station had, two years ago, been changed from a research purpose to a regulatory purpose. I cannot recall or find record that TNC was consulted about, or notified of, this change. As a result, neither we nor Kansas State University representatives were able to evaluate or communicate implications of the change.

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> While neither I nor my staff possess particular expertise in technical aspects of air quality monitoring or enforcement, we are aware that use of data from Konza for regulatory purposes could have negative and unintended impacts on important research, conservation and other activities in the region, including prescribed and experimental burning. We are committed to continuing the long-term research efforts that have been underway at the Konza site for over a decade. We recognize the importance of long-term air quality data sets to EPA and to researchers at the Konza Prairie. However, I do want to have opportunity to discuss whether it is appropriate for the Konza monitor to continue in place for regulatory purposes.

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> Mr. Tom Gross of KDHE informed me of a scheduled call on the afternoon of April 11th to discuss this issue. I would appreciate the opportunity to participate in that discussion, or in another near-term venue to address this issue. Please feel free to call me at your earliest convenience at the mobile phone number below.

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> Thank you.

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> Rob Manes
> Director, The Nature Conservancy of Kansas
> 785-233-4400 (office)
> 620-388-1940 (mobile)
> 700 SW Jackson, Suite 804
> Topeka, KS 66603
> rmanes@tnc.org
> nature.org

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